

Editor's Report

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For a better life

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NEW YORK — Offhand there might seem to be little connection between this week's two most important events — the windup of President Nixon's latest Mission to Moscow and the nation's 198th celebration of its Declaration of Independence. But there is, in a way which should not be overlooked.



W. R. Hearst Jr.

Both events naturally were on my mind in considering this holiday weekend column. And if you really mull over what has just been occurring in Moscow and what happened in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, you will see that their connection lies in the ability of men to submerge irreconcilable differences for the sake of higher goals — when all really try.

This may puzzle some readers who have forgotten their American history. Most people understand that today's detente movement is an effort to preserve peace despite basically conflicting ideologies. Some, how-

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ever, may need reminding that an equally divisive gap had to be bridged before the noble Declaration written by Thomas Jefferson was unanimously adopted by our 13 original states.

The great division was on the issue of slavery, which Jefferson had condemned in his original draft. Northern and southern delegates to the Second Continental Congress debated the matter with a ferocity which included whacking away at each other with their canes. Mention of slavery finally was deleted and the issue shelved for the greater common purpose of founding a new nation.

Agreeing on the Declaration of Independence was a tremendous achievement. Some idea of the idealistic fervor it generated among the delegates and throughout all the newly proclaimed states for the matter—is contained in a letter written to his wife by John Adams, of Massachusetts, in which he declared:

"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illumination, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore.

"You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these States. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means. And that posterity will triumph."

In addition to being an extraordinary prophecy, the letter of John Adams stressed what I am trying to stress here today — the tremendous importance of working together for a better life in spite of all obstacles and differences.

THAT, IN HIS own words, is what Richard M. Nixon has been trying to do in his many remarkable peace initiatives around the world — the latest being his just-concluded third summit meeting with Communist boss Leonid Brezhnev. Here's how he summed up the basic intent and value of their talks in his departing television address to the Russian people last Tuesday:

"Our two nations will continue to have differences. We have different systems and in many respects we have different values. Inevitably our interests will not always be in accord. But the important thing is that we are learning . . . to move ahead together in an expanding field of mutual interests.

"Ahead are new vistas, new spheres of cooperation for the benefit of both our great peoples. Everywhere will come up new sprouts of mutually fruitful beneficial cooperation of our countries in the name of peace and a better life for the people."

Critics of the President have been saying he "failed" in his latest mission because new agreements were minimal and he did not achieve a basic understanding on limiting nuclear offense weapons. They ignore the fact that no such immediate agreement was realistically expected and overlook the fact that there may never be such an agreement unless the cooperative spirit of detente is maintained.

It is the working together toward that loftiest of common goals — "a better life for the people" — which is all-important. Men were able to do this in 1776 while remaining bitterly divided over slavery. They are striving to do so again, as in the latest U.S.-Soviet summit, despite possibly even deeper political and philosophical divisions.

On this Independence Day weekend we have endless reasons to rejoice that the delegates in Philadelphia were able to surmount their grave differences for the sake of the higher goal.

And we have good cause indeed to be grateful that today's politically-opposed world leaders are actively trying to do the same.

Rome was not built in a day. Neither was the United States of America. Both were developed slowly, step by difficult step, just as the safer world now being sought will have to be built.

Far more than a better life is at stake. Failure could mean world devastation and the end of any life worth living.